



Empower | Innovate | Sustain

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

(Recycle Up! Ghana)

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Executive Summary

The year 2025 was a period of significant growth and impact for RUG as we continued to empower individuals and communities through circular economy solutions, green entrepreneurship development and environmental sustainability initiatives. Guided by our vision of creating a world free of waste and our mission to empower young people to develop local solutions to local problems, we strengthened livelihoods, promoted inclusive economic opportunities and deepened strategic partnerships that advanced our organisational goals.

Throughout the year, RUG implemented 5 transformative programmes targeting rural women, young entrepreneurs, pupils, and women waste pickers.

Our Nationwide Waste Education Campaign (NWECC) promoted responsible waste management and environmental stewardship in 17 schools while onboarding an additional 18 schools to the program.

Through the Community Green Economy Project (CGEP), 34 women from rural communities were equipped with practical circular economy skills, entrepreneurship training and asset support to establish green micro-enterprises.

The Green Incubation program also built the capacity of 15 entrepreneurs representing 8 startups from the idea stage to the minimum viable product (MVP) stage.

In addition, the Women in Circularity (WIC) project strengthened the livelihoods and wellbeing of women waste pickers by improving access to occupational safety support, health services and scholarships for 10 of their wards.

RUG also expanded opportunities for entrepreneurs through its role as an implementing partner for the government of Ghana's National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) Adwumawura programme in the Mamapong and Ejura-Sekyedumase Municipal Assemblies. A total of 152 entrepreneurs and businesses benefitted from entrepreneurship training, mentorship, business proposal development and business advisory support designed to strengthen enterprise sustainability and job creation.

Institutional growth remained a key priority throughout the year as RUG strengthened relationships with development partners, government agencies and ecosystem stakeholders through strategic engagements, technical exchange, and capacity-building workshops. The ecosystem stakeholders engaged include Brot für die Welt, National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme, Ghana Hubs Network, and Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst.

In 2025, RUG continued to advance its mission, reaching over 423 beneficiaries across Ghana. The year marked significant progression in our two core pillars of work, with 5 projects successfully implemented.

1. Organization Overview

Mission, Vision and Values

Mission: To empower the youth to develop local solutions to environmental and societal problems and truly make a difference.

Vision: A world free of waste. A world in which waste is either reduced, reused, or recycled for environmental, social and economic benefits.

Primary Location: Ghana

Values:

- Sustainability
- Empowerment
- Impact-driven
- Integrity
- Innovation
- Teamwork
- Continuous Learning
- Inclusion
- Communication
- Resilience

Pillars of Work

Pillar 1: Awareness Creation and Behaviour Change

This pillar aims to transform community attitudes and practices around waste management by creating awareness and embarking on educational campaigns. Geared towards fostering behaviour change, this pillar empowers people with the knowledge and tools necessary for protecting the environment. This matters because poor waste management is an alarming problem that contributes to floods, public health risks, and climate challenges, to mention a few. By equipping people with the right knowledge, practical skills, and resources, the pillar fosters a culture of responsibility, circular economy, and environmental sustainability.

Projects executed under this pillar include the Nationwide Waste Education Campaign, Summer Camps, and Clean-up exercises.

Pillar 2: Green Enterprise Development

This pillar focuses on fostering environmentally sustainable businesses and supporting existing enterprises to transition toward greener practices. It builds the capacities of entrepreneurs and

businesses at varying levels through business development training, green product development training, entrepreneurship training, resource support, coaching and mentorship. As the pillar addresses waste management issues, it concurrently creates economic opportunities, including decent job creation for income generation.

Projects executed under this initiative include the Incubation Program, the Community Green Economy Project (CGEP) and the Women in Circularity (WiC) Program.

2. Projects & Major Activities

Nationwide Waste Education Campaign (NWEK)

The Nationwide Waste Education Campaign Project educates pupils between the ages of 9 and 17 on proper waste management practices, with a specific focus on plastic waste. Executed through school clubs, the project also empowers pupils to develop sustainable habits of waste reduction, source segregation, and recycling. The project is currently implemented in Ghana across three regions, including Greater Accra, Ashanti and Central. The project's major activities carried out in 2025 are as follows.

Trash to Treasure Competition

The competition aimed to foster creativity and promote sustainable practices among NWEK club members in participating schools within Cohort 4. The competition, themed "Unlocking Creativity in Sustainable Art and Craft," encouraged students to transform waste materials into valuable and artistic creations. The event saw an impressive attendance of 78 individuals, comprising school teachers, NWEK club members, mentors of each participating school and team members of RUG. The competition showcased remarkable innovation and dedication from the young participants as each school presented unique treasures that demonstrated their understanding of upcycling and sustainable art. The judging criteria focused on the predominance of plastic waste, creativity and originality, craftsmanship, value communication, and behavioural change. The results were as follows:

- 1st Place: Wilson Adventist Preparatory School
- 2nd Place: St. Louis Jubilee School
- 3rd Place: St. Anne's International School



A participating pupil showing their upcycled products during the trash to treasure competition

Waste Ambassadors Training

20 youth were recruited and taken through a two-day comprehensive training program on waste management, principles of sustainability, linear and circular economy to build their capacity to lead school clubs as waste ambassadors and mentors.



Group picture with ambassadors after training session



Practical activities during the ambassador training session

School Club Activities

Each trained ambassador was assigned to a school to lead the school club sessions, educating and empowering the pupils on proper waste management practices. Topics spanned from Introduction to plastic and plastic waste, Impact of plastic waste and the waste management hierarchy.



An ambassador engaging with the students during a club meeting

Donation of dustbins and waste management handbooks

To ensure the schools have the tools necessary for practical success, RUG's waste management handbooks were distributed and used as resources for the school clubs. Five waste collection bins were also donated to each school to encourage waste segregation.



Handbooks and dustbins distributed to schools

Results

Outputs	Outcomes
19 youth ambassadors recruited and trained to lead school club sessions	19 youth have been empowered with waste management knowledge
Additional 18 schools onboarded onto the project and 20 clubs implemented across schools	Over 800 pupils reached with waste management education
80 waste collection and separation systems distributed to participating schools	18 schools practice source segregation with focus on plastic waste for recycling
190 copies of the waste management handbook were distributed to participating schools.	18 schools and over 800 pupils interacted with the handbook and gained knowledge on waste management

RUG Incubation Program

The RUG Incubation Program is designed to support young entrepreneurs aged 18 to 35 who are developing innovative solutions within Ghana's circular economy. The program focuses on transitioning green business ideas into startups by building participants' capacity via business development training for sustainable enterprise creation, business mentorship, and minimum viable product development support.

The program equips young entrepreneurs with practical tools to transform environmental challenges into scalable green startups while contributing to job creation and sustainable development in Ghana. The project's major activities carried out in 2025 are as follows.

Cohort 6 Bootcamp

RUG conducted an intensive capacity-building bootcamp designed to refine participants' business ideas and shortlist the applicants for the incubation program. The bootcamp strengthened participants' ability to clearly define problems, develop fitting solutions, and communicate effectively. It also introduced participants to sustainability and green business concepts, including the lean model canvas.

The bootcamp successfully progressed seven green businesses, including FibreLux, Ellora Cosmetics, Ecofurn Ghana, AdTech, Yarps Foods, Jostimo, and NafiPad, into the formal incubation phase.



Participant engaging with the pitch panel



Facilitator guiding a participant in a presentation



Participants working on deliverables during the bootcamp

Introductory Call

An introductory meeting was held via Zoom to onboard participants into the Incubation Program. The session provided an overview of RUG's history, mission, and other active projects under its Green Enterprise Development Pillar: RUG Incubation Program, Community Green Economy Project, and Women in Circularity.

Participants were introduced to the structure and purpose of each project, with emphasis on supporting circular economy solutions, improving livelihoods, and promoting environmental sustainability. The Nationwide Waste Education Campaign was also highlighted as part of RUG's behavioural change and awareness initiatives.

Incubation Training - Design Thinking

A two-day in-person Design Thinking training was held, bringing together nine entrepreneurs representing six startups. The session focused on equipping entrepreneurs with creative problem-solving skills to design human-centred, market-ready green solutions.

The curriculum engaged participants in practical exercises using the 5P Canvas framework. This explored passion, purpose, power, problems of customers, and propositions, alongside group reflections and business ideation activities. A key highlight was the integration of a 16-personality assessment to help entrepreneurs align their individual strengths with critical entrepreneurial skills, followed by targeted validation sessions covering prototyping, customer discovery, value chain analysis, and iterative business model improvement.

The training successfully enhanced the capabilities of the participants and strengthened their ability to iterate on their ideas. This ensured that the green startups possessed the framework necessary to transition from initial concepts to scalable, market-ready ventures.



Design thinking facilitator with participants



Participants presenting their work during design thinking training.

Results

Area	Output	Outcome
Bootcamp	11 startups trained, of which 7 progressed to the incubation phase.	Improved clarity of business ideas, stronger pitch development, and better understanding of green business models
Introductory Call	7 startups oriented to the incubation program.	Participants gained understanding of the program and expectations.
Design Thinking Training	9 entrepreneurs from 6 startups trained in 5P Canvas personality testing and validation exercises	Strengthened problem-solving, customer understanding, and business model validation skills. Enhanced capacity of entrepreneurs to design and test human-centred green solutions.

Community Green Economy Project (CGEP)

Women in rural communities face limited employment opportunities and low participation in income-generating activities. CGEP addresses this challenge by equipping these women with circular vocational and business development skills and productive assets to create sustainable livelihoods while reducing environmental waste.

The project directly benefited 34 rural women aged 18-45 from low-income households across two communities within Sekyere South and Afigya Kwabre North Districts. Priority was given to vulnerable groups including unemployed women, single mothers, persons with disabilities, and divorcees interested in starting micro-enterprises.

Beneficiaries Recruitment and Selection Exercise

To identify and enrol women with the greatest need and potential to benefit from the project, an in-person community-based recruitment exercise was conducted in the Bedomase and Boamang-Kyerekrom communities.

Announcements and information sessions at the community information centres were made and held before and on the day of the recruitment exercise to communicate the project eligibility criteria and training opportunities. Interested applicants were screened and selected based on factors such as economic vulnerability, commitment and willingness to participate in the full project cycle.

The exercise successfully identified 50+ interested women and enrolled 34 in the 2025/2026 project cycle, ensuring that the project resources were directed toward beneficiaries most likely to benefit from the intervention.



RUG team's Visit to Kyerekrom Information Centre



RUG team assisting beneficiaries in completing recruitment forms

Product Development Training (Circular Vocational Training)

To equip rural women with practical skills to convert community waste into marketable products, a five-day intensive training was delivered to 34 women, creating sustainable livelihood opportunities. Participants received hands-on training in snail farming, added-value African Black soap and paper packaging production. The training emphasised efficient use of resources, environmental sustainability, product quality and income-generation opportunities.

The women acquired practical skills and the foundation required to establish green micro-businesses using locally available resources.



Beneficiaries in the practical session of African Black soap production



Beneficiaries experiencing the practical session in snail farming

Results

Outputs	Outcomes
34 rural women equipped with green vocational skills.	90% of the women had started using the vocational skills acquired, four weeks after the training.
31 rural women equipped with entrepreneurial skills such as financial management, bookkeeping, entrepreneurial qualities, etc	31 women gained business operations knowledge and launched 5 operational green micro-businesses.

Women in Circularity Program

Women in Circularity (WIC) is a RUG initiative that supports the livelihood of women plastic waste pickers by improving their income opportunities, working conditions, health, and overall well-being. It does this by increasing access to primary healthcare, conducting educational sessions, and empowering them economically. Currently, women waste pickers within the Ashanti Region of Ghana have primarily benefited from the program. By providing this support, WIC strengthens women's role in the plastics recycling value chain alongside promoting environmental sustainability through increased waste recovery for onward recycling.

Health and Safety Outreach for Women Waste Pickers

A one-day Health and Safety Outreach event was organised for 200 women plastic waste pickers. The event sensitized the women on health insurance, and enrolled them free of charge onto Ghana's national health insurance scheme (NHIS). In addition, they received education on Sexual and Reproductive Health, and also received personal protective equipment for use during work.



RUG staff taking women waste pickers' information for NHIS Registration



A Health Professional educating the women waste pickers on Sexual and Reproductive Health



Women waste pickers holding protective clothing presented to them

Scholarship Support

On 17th December 2025, RUG provided financial support to wards of selected women plastic waste pickers with the aim of enabling their enrollment into senior high school education. The women beneficiaries expressed great joy and appreciation for benefiting from the scholarship support. They noted that the funds would help them meet important needs, including purchasing learning materials and supporting the education of their wards.



RUG staff explaining the criteria and process of applying for the scholarship to the women



A group picture with the waste pickers after the initial scholarship meeting



Handing of Scholarship Cash Prize to Selected Women Waste Pickers

Results

Area	Output	Outcomes	Impact
Health & Safety Outreach	200 women waste pickers benefited from NHIS enrollment, sexual & reproductive health education, and PPE distribution.	Improved knowledge on health, hygiene, reproductive health, and safety practices. Increased access to primary healthcare.	Improved health and safety of women waste pickers.
Scholarship Financial Support	10 wards of 10 women were supported with funds for senior high school enrollment.	Beneficiaries experienced financial relief and were able to enrol in senior high school.	

National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) - Adwumawura Programme

The Adwumawura Programme is a flagship initiative of the Government of Ghana implemented through the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme. The programme sought to address youth unemployment by empowering young Ghanaian entrepreneurs aged 18–40 to start, sustain, and scale viable businesses across all sectors of the economy.

As an implementing partner, RUG delivered the programme within the Mampong Municipal and Ejura-Sekyedumase Municipal Assemblies. Through entrepreneurship training, mentorship, and business development support, the programme aimed to strengthen the capacity of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs to build sustainable enterprises, create employment opportunities, and contribute to local economic development.

The programme targeted businesses at both the ideation and growth stages. Beneficiaries included youth-led businesses, women entrepreneurs, persons with disabilities, and other underserved groups seeking to establish or expand micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

Beneficiary Registration and Onboarding

RUG conducted registration and onboarding activities within its implementation area - the Asante Mampong Municipal Assembly, Ghana to register selected entrepreneurs for the programme. A total of 152 entrepreneurs were successfully registered and onboarded onto the programme.



RUG staff registering Adwumawura beneficiaries onto the programme

Business Development and Entrepreneurship Training

A five-week entrepreneurship and business development training was delivered to 152 participants. The training covered Personal Leadership and Core Life Skills, Business Management, Marketing and Sales, Governance, Finance, and Funding. Sessions combined practical learning, discussions, and business-focused exercises designed to help participants improve their business operations and growth strategies.

Mentorship

Following the training, a two-month mentorship was conducted to support the beneficiaries in developing their pitch decks and business proposals for the next steps in the program.

Results

Outputs	Outcomes
152 entrepreneurs trained in business development.	152 entrepreneurs gained knowledge and skills in business development.
100 entrepreneurs mentored for 2 months, and guided to develop business proposals.	100 entrepreneurs successfully developed their business proposals.



Business development training at Mampong Business Resource Centre

3. Stakeholder Engagement

Brot für die Welt (Bread for the World) (BftW) Visit

The West Africa Programme Officer for BftW conducted a field visit to engage the RUG team and beneficiaries related to the BftW-funded project.

The engagement included an interactive session with the implementation team, during which detailed discussions were held on project recruitment processes, monitoring and evaluation systems, beneficiary selection criteria, and overall programme performance. She also reviewed funding technicalities relating to reporting and compliance requirements.

Also, she undertook field visits to selected beneficiary entrepreneurs to observe project outcomes at the community level and have first-hand interactions with them.

In addition to the visit, BftW organised a three-day fundraising training programme for partner organisations in Ghana and Nigeria. As a participant, RUG benefited from the training through strengthened organisational capacity in resource mobilisation, sustainability planning, and donor engagement.



RUG staff and BfdW Representative

National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP) Visit

A team from the National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme conducted a due diligence and assessment visit to RUG Hub ahead of the implementation of their flagship programme - Adwumawura.

The visit focused on assessing organisational capacity, operational readiness, and resource availability for programme delivery. Key areas reviewed included training facilities, logistics, inclusivity, staffing capacity, and implementation structures.

All technical and operational queries raised by the NEIP team were addressed during the engagement. The visit also included verification of training spaces and institutional arrangements, contributing to the validation of RUG as an implementing partner for the programme.

Ghana Hubs Network (GHN) Visit

The Ghana Hubs Network (GHN) visited RUG Hub as part of its engagement with member organisations to better understand their work within the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem. The interaction provided a platform for RUG to present its work in climate action and circular economy entrepreneurship.

In addition, the engagement focused on operational challenges, programmatic focus, and strategic direction, offering advisory insights on strengthening alignment with climate-focused entrepreneurship and innovation priorities.

The visit further reinforced RUG's positioning within Ghana's innovation ecosystem and facilitated peer learning among hub-based organisations.



A group picture of the RUG team and GHN representatives



RUG team engaging with GHN representatives

Katholischer Akademischer Ausländer-Dienst (KAAD) Visit

A delegation of KAAD (Catholic Academic Exchange Service) scholarship beneficiaries across different levels of higher education visited RUG as part of an experiential learning and knowledge exchange engagement. The visit provided participants with deeper insight into RUG's circular economy and youth entrepreneurship interventions. The delegation also toured Green Shift, RUG's sister organisation involved in plastic recycling and circular production systems, to better understand practical applications of waste-to-value innovation.



KAAD members at RUG Hub



KAAD members touring the Green Shift warehouse

4.Looking Ahead: Our 2026 Commitments

In 2026, RUG aims to intensify project efforts to enable an expansion of reach. Thus, more youth, women, and other vulnerable groups across Ghana will come to benefit from the organisation's efforts towards addressing environmental and social problems, primarily waste management and unemployment respectively.

5.Donors & Partners

Brot
für die Welt

**genial
sozial**
Deine Arbeit gegen Armut

Beiersdorf



NEP
NATIONAL
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
INNOVATION PLAN

Annexes

Social Media Channels	External Articles Published	Gallery
LinkedIn	Empowering Rural Women - Peace FM Online	Pictures
Facebook	Empowering Rural Women - MyJoyOnline	
Instagram	CGEP Beneficiary Testimonial - LinkedIn	
YouTube		